

RECORD OF ASSISTANCE SECTION 21

Date:	13 - 14 June 1996
Title of Publication:	"Pleasure Chest" Sign on Karangahape Rd
Other Known Titles:	Drawn images above 'Pleasure Chest' on Karangahape Rd
Format:	Sign
Country Of Origin:	New Zealand
Owner:	The Owner, Pleasure Chest

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SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION:

Record of consultation regarding the signs known as the Vegas Girl sign on Karangahape Road, the Venus Girl sign on Karangahape Road, the Kinks sign on Karangahape Road, the Pleasure Chest sign on Karangahape Road.

This summary records only information which was of assistance to the Office in forming an opinion on the publication on which to base a classification decision.

Date of consultation: 13 - 14 June 1996

Location: Board Room of the Hobson-Eastern Bays Area Office, Auckland City Council, Cygna House 345 Queen Street, Auckland
Meeting Room, Auckland Girls' Grammar School, Auckland

Representatives from the Office of Film and Literature Classification present at Discussion:

Kathryn Paterson - Chief Censor of Film and Literature
Lois Hutchinson - Deputy Chief Censor of Film and Literature
Cathrine Austin - Information Unit Manager
Nick McCully - Senior Classification Officer
Jonathan Lane - Classification Officer
Heather Mills - Information Unit Officer
Loula Stavridis - Personal Assistant

BACKGROUND TO CONSULTATION:

Following meetings to discuss the need for further information which might assist the Office in forming an opinion on the publications before the Office: *the Vegas Girl sign on Karangahape Road, the Venus Girl sign on Karangahape Road, the Kinks sign on Karangahape Road, and the Pleasure Chest sign on Karangahape Road*, it was decided to arrange a consultation in Auckland under section 21 of the Act.

Persons consulted and their background:

The Applicant and supporter

The owners of the Pleasure Chest and the Las Vegas Theatre Restaurant

The Yellow Bus Company

Students of Auckland Girls' Grammar School

Staff and Board of Trustees Representatives from Auckland Girls' Grammar School, Newton Central School and Freemans Bay Primary School

Representatives of the Karangahape Road Business Association

Members of the Auckland City Council and Hobson-Eastern Bays Area Ward

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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

During the consultation issues relevant to all four signs were discussed. Where a comment specific to a particular sign was made, that sign has been named. The following documentation represents a summary of all discussion.

With the exception of the applicant and the owners of the Las Vegas and Pleasure Chest, all meetings in this report appear in the order that they were scheduled.

For each meeting, this report presents a summary of the issues raised in discussion. This is followed by notes taken by staff during the meeting. Individuals' names have not been attributed to comments. Where comments focused on one particular issue or were repeated by different people in the meeting, they have been listed together. Explanatory 'riders' to comments appear in square brackets.

The comments recorded are a record of the substantive issues raised by consulted parties. They are close approximations of statements made during meetings and should not be taken as verbatim quotes.

DISCUSSION WITH THE APPLICANT AND SUPPORTER:

Summary of issues raised by consulted parties

- The exposure of a number of specified groups to the signs. The specified groups were: school children, office workers on Karangahape Road, clients of the New Zealand Employment Service, bus, car and foot traffic and women.
- Karangahape Road is a major thoroughfare for traffic [in comparison with the 'side street status' of Fort Street].
- The area was unsafe for women, especially at night.
- The public had no choice but to see the signs, whether or not they wished to be exposed to them. For anybody using Karangahape Road as a thoroughfare, or place of work, the signs could not be avoided.
- The messages given by the images were negative towards women.
- Some advertising for the shops was acceptable, but this should be minimal and subtle.
- Frustration at the lack of response from Auckland City Council to concern over the signs

Notes taken during the meeting

- School girls and children are part of the reason the signs are so inappropriate.
- Karangahape Road has lots of schoolgirls walking to school. The signs affect the students' self esteem. You see the students looking the other way. It's insensitive allowing the signs in a public place.
- The foot traffic is all school kids. There is a lot of car traffic.
- Schoolboys travel through on the way to other areas.
- I have concern over parlours setting up in areas with primary schools.
- I don't look out on the signs but others in my Office do. The signs shouldn't be there because they're not appropriate.
- All people on Karangahape Road are exposed to the signs. Some people don't like them - those who don't like the signs block them out. I block them out. They used to upset me so much that now I do not look at them.
- The NZ Employment Office is right across the road from some of the signs. They have never complained because they're too used to it. Visitors to the Office consume pornographic images while they wait.
- Auckland is a tourist city - there are a lot of visitors.
- Fort Street is an easier area to avoid. It's not a main thoroughfare. Karangahape Road has lots of buses, cars and people.
- The signs have high exposure to a large number of people. They need a main street to survive. A smaller street means less accessibility. They need people seeing them.
- You can't avoid the signs. I timed the stop light opposite the signs. You are stopped there for 1 minute. You read the signs when you're at the lights. It makes people, especially women, uncomfortable.
- Women don't like walking or driving round there. You are not safe. I've been approached and had someone ask "how much are you". You've got to be aware of your body language, what you're wearing ...
- Women I know have been approached. You're fair game if you're on Karangahape Road after dark.
- Our work car park is under the Venus Girl. Women I work with have to be escorted to their cars at night.
- The impact of soliciting on Karangahape Road, and of the signs on Karangahape Road are different. There's the issue of the pornographers right to advertise versus our right not to have pornography in our faces. I think it is a civil rights issue. I am offended by those images.
- The signs give you no choice. You can't switch off like you do with TV.
- There is harm to the community by the signs being there. I would like to get rid of the signs.
- Removing the signs would make a difference - it's a start. I would like to see them gone - off the main road.
- If the signs went it would not change the area immediately, but it would in the long term - say 5 years.
- The place where the sign is is a problem. [Reference to the sign above the Exclusive Shop]. The images are sexualised because of the context. The image doesn't bother me. It's just two people together. It's the context. It's sexualised because of the shop. Clothing has not altered the effect of the signs - not in the context that the signs are in - outside a sex shop. [Reference to painting of clothes on the Exclusive Shop sign.]

- It's terribly wrong. The Vegas Girl is the longest staying image. It was put up 15 years ago. It's a classic pornography image - a Playboy centerfold.
- They are giving a message that love and sold sex and strip shows are all the same. Those attitudes aren't doing anything for our society. They're devious. They encourage men to go out with other women - that's what I see.
- Karangahape Road is affecting people's self esteem. It's saying it's okay for women to be just bodies. It's keeping women in their place. That has got to stop.
- People spend a lot of time on Karangahape Road. When men look at the Vegas Girl, they are reinforcing their attitudes on women. Some men like it and look at it. Others see it as shameful.
- Men suffer from guilt and shame. They get low self esteem. They take out their guilt on others and gain power. The signs encourage power.
- People become desensitized with Karangahape Road. They get used to it and then they don't react. The explicitness has not much to do with it. It's the message - the power over women.
- There's the dangers of pornography. People acting out what they are seeing. In my work as a counsellor my most regular callers are men. They have problems with sex abuse, to them and by them. The influence of pornography is known to counsellors.
- There should be restrictions on adult shop advertising. There aren't any signs like the Exclusive Shop and the others, on Vivian/Cuba Streets in Wellington. They use the wording like 'toys', 'lingerie' as a front to selling porn.
- You could say 'Adult Shop' but limit it to that. That's all you can do in England. [This comment was made in reference to a question on the use of words rather than images in advertising.]
- Another shop uses a little sign - they have a different approach - heads down. [This was given as an example of a business selling sexually explicit material that used inoffensive signage.]
- I prefer how the Fort Street operators are advertising their businesses.
- Some shops have removed images of their own accord, eg the image of a fully naked women standing in a peephole at Juliette's.
- In 1993 a petition was made regarding the signs on Karangahape Road. When I was collecting signatures very few people turned me down. We had 1700 signatures. We collected those signatures over a 3 week period. Dame Barbara Goodwin presented the petition to the Council.
- Meadowbank in Auckland has become porn free. The dairies no longer stock pornography because the population didn't want it there.
- I feel dissatisfaction with the Council. They put a new bylaw in place to restrict offensive signage and then said that they couldn't make it retrospective.
- When the Vegas Girl fell down we felt a sense of relief.
- We applied to the council about the Vegas Girl when it got put up again but they wouldn't do anything about it. They said they couldn't do anything unless it was measured [to see whether it complied with bylaws relating to sign size].
- The Council implied in correspondence that they would do something. Nearly a year later they said to go to the OFLC.
- The Karangahape Road Business Association was dismayed when the sign went back up.
- When you complain you don't get listened to. Nothing gets done. You ask yourself if it's worth doing anything. It impacts on your own self image.

- I didn't approach the Department of Internal Affairs Inspectors about the signs. I've never been advised to and it never occurred to me. I've asked the Department of Internal Affairs to do something about the glass showcase at the top of Symonds Street. It's full of photographs of naked Asian women.
- You can see inside the shops, especially at night. The material inside is really explicit.
- The striptease businesses have shifted out of Karangahape Road. The Las Vegas is the last one left.
- If the majority of people don't want the signs, why are they still here?

DISCUSSION WITH THE OWNERS OF THE PLEASURE CHEST AND LAS VEGAS:

Summary of issues raised by consulted parties

- Karangahape Road falls into two distinct sections. The 'respectable' end and, beyond Pitt Street, the area where the sex industry is operating. The Pitt Street end is not considered to be as safe.
- Personal safety on Karangahape Road has lessened with an increasing number of prostitutes, transvestites, drug addicts, streetkids and glue sniffers in the area.
- The signs are not offensive. The images are no worse than pictures in magazines.
- The applicant is the only complainant out of one million people in Auckland and does not have public support.
- The applicant is radical in his view and has a previous conviction for damaging a sign.
- People have contacted the shop owners expressing support for the signs.
- The removal of the signs would be expensive and could affect business negatively.

Notes taken during the meeting

- The respectable part of Karangahape Road stops at Pitt Street. The rest of it is the sleazy area. You're not safe in the scungy area. You're quite safe in the respectable part.
- You don't know Karangahape Road unless you live there or you're there at 1 - 2 am. The night life on Karangahape Road doesn't start till 10 pm.
- There are seven new shops that can't be rented because of the area. People are afraid.
- There are lots of prostitutes, transvestites, drug addicts, streetkids and glue sniffers in the area. My business [the Las Vegas] has dropped 50% in the last year.
- There are problems in the car parks with vandalism of cars and it's increasing.
- There's increased prostitution, especially since the transvestites began drinking in the gay bars. There have been 50-60 complaints from the apartments on Karangahape Road about the noise of some of these clubs.
- Personal safety on the street has lessened.

- There's nothing wrong with the signs. The context they've been submitted under is utterly ridiculous.
- Saying they're the same as "horseflesh at an auction" [quote from the applicant's submission]. I don't see how you can grasp that.
- The view that the signs are 'in your face', 'you can't avoid them' is ridiculous. There are more explicit pictures in magazines. Kinks is more explicit.
- People look out of curiosity not disgust. The Pleasure Chest sign is not offensive.
- I don't think the Las Vegas sign is offensive - certainly not at night time.
- You can't see the stock from the road. The signs aren't explicit. What's getting up people's noses is what's in the shop not the sign.
- The Las Vegas business and some signage has been there 20 years.
- The Las Vegas sign is a 'class lady'. It's not a cheap picture. I want the sign left alone. It brightens the place up and gives it character.
- I put up the Las Vegas sign because of the area. It wasn't cheap to put up. Fort Street is the centre of the sex industry in Auckland, but Karangahape Road is also red light. In other areas the sign wouldn't be right but this is a red light area. I have had groups try and deface the sign. I've now got security devices on it to stop that happening.
- The Pleasure Chest has been on Karangahape Road four to five years. We've had it three years. It's always had the same signage. The applicant has tried to get others to do something about the sign and they haven't. Finally, the council put him on to you.
- We have talked to people in our shop [the Pleasure Chest] - they can't believe it.
- Women aren't upset by the shop [Pleasure Chest]. They comment on the friendly atmosphere, good lighting, how clean it is.
- The Las Vegas sign is a landmark - people ring me and express their support for it. It's part of the scene on Karangahape Road at night time.
- In terms of business at the Pleasure Chest, they're a milestone to me on the road. Overseas there's more availability for what you can put on signs. Here it's more heavily censored. It's hard for us now. It will be harder from 1 July. [Increased fees for classification of publications came into force on 1 July 1996.]
- None of my workers at the Las Vegas comment on the signs. All the girls like it. All the people who come to the club like it. It's a landmark.
- It will cost me several thousand dollars to take the Las Vegas sign down.
- I don't know what the effect would be on the Pleasure Chest if we took the sign down.
[One partner speaking]
It'd kill it. [Other partner]
- The schools say they're offended by our sign [the Pleasure Chest]. The schoolgirls' language is more offensive than our sign. Kids aren't naive today. They've got a thin argument. Our pictures aren't explicit. You get worse in Metro and More magazines.
- Kids don't even look at the pictures.
- There was a march organised about the signs on Karangahape Road. They put up posters to publicise it. We got verbal abuse. They got a dozen people total on that march - including their husbands and kids. They didn't get public support.
- If I had people make complaints about the Las Vegas sign then I would do something. I haven't had complaints. If a decent woman came to my place and said she didn't like my sign ... then I would listen. No one's come to me.
- The Pleasure Chest sign was smashed. We had the person prosecuted. They had to pay restitution.
- The applicant just has a radical view.

- The applicant is the only complainant to your Office out of one million people in Auckland. He wants the whole sign taken down. "Obsession is a dangerous thing".
- The Pleasure Chest gets clientele from all over - out of town because they can't buy things in their own area. Lots of mail order.
- There is a lot of competition between the sex shops and it's increasing especially with video shops.
- Where do you stop ... they won't be happy until we're out of business.
- The sex workers wouldn't be affected if the signs went. They've been there for years.
- The photos on Fort Street are worse.
- Alcohol and cigarettes are more abused in New Zealand than sex. They do more harm than non-violent erotica in New Zealand.

DISCUSSION WITH SEVENTH FORM STUDENTS AT AUCKLAND GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Summary of issues raised by consulted parties

- The signs gave negative images of women, which contradicted the messages students were receiving at school.
- Auckland Girls' Grammar School and its students were associated with the signs in people's minds. This was bad publicity for the school.
- Students felt degraded and embarrassed by the signs.
- Students had no choice but to see the signs when travelling to and from school.
- The area in general was not considered safe after normal school hours. Students did not feel they could walk by themselves to buses.
- Students had been approached by people on the street.
- The level of advertising was inappropriate and extreme. Some advertising was acceptable, but it should be less overt. Both images and words on signs gave inappropriate messages to the students and public.
- The removal of the signs would be a positive step.

Notes taken during the meeting

- The signs are inappropriate, not discrete. Even in the 3rd form, you know what they are about. You don't have a choice about that. They're quite explicit.
- They're gross, degrading, really horrible.
- If a programme was on TV with those pictures it would be a R16 or R18.
- At school we are taught to be proud of who we are as women. Then you go out and see those images.
- It becomes an issue while you're quite young because you deal with it every day.

- We shouldn't have to feel embarrassed.
- Seeing the pictures is as bad as going into the shops in some ways.
- You try to ignore the signs and you get used to them after a while.
- After a while you start mocking them. It's a way of dealing with them.
- It makes us think negatively of men. It's degrading to them. We see them look at the signs. It makes us pass judgment on males.
- The Kinks sign is the worst.
- The Las Vegas sign worries me the most. She's on her knees, naked.
- Auckland Girls' Grammar School is related with the sex shops in people's minds.
- Some of the pupils at the boys' school think it is a joke with us by the signs and the shops.
- You see people taking photos of the signs. It's bad publicity for the school.
- Our parents see Auckland Girls' Grammar School as a good school but they don't like the area.
- When you're going to and from school, you can't walk past without seeing them. You don't have a choice. Most people have to go past them to get to school.
- We don't choose to have access to the publications.
- We're not saying they can't exist, it's just we don't want them in our face.
- Can't the shops move to Fort Street? It makes it different if they are on a side street. It gives you a choice not to see them.
- The character of Karangahape Road would change if the signs went, but that change would be positive. Karangahape Road is changing anyway.
- If the signs weren't there, it would make it more discrete. If the signs are cut down, who knows they're there.
- Everyone knows what the adult shops are even if they don't have a huge sign.
- If the signs weren't there it would make a difference to us. We feel embarrassed and degraded by them.
- Most students bus in and out. Only 50 or so students would not catch the bus.
- Most students catch the bus on Symonds Street. They walk along Karangahape Road.
- We either wait outside the shops and signs for our buses or if we catch another bus, the bus goes past the signs.
- The Las Vegas sign - from the bus it hits you in the eye. If you're walking on the left you can see it.
- Most people catching the bus walk past Kinks and the Pleasure Chest.
- Moving the bus stop would be good but it wouldn't change things. We'd still have to go though Karangahape Road anyway.
- The bus stop shouldn't have to shift because of the signs.
- It's usually safe catching the bus. There have been some fights - prostitutes attacking school girls, because the prostitute was working a street corner that a student was waiting on.
- Once there was a guy masturbating on the bus. Sometimes there's fights between the prostitutes. If there wasn't so much advertising it could decrease the number of people like that.
- You get guys tooting their horns at you at the bus stop. We've had people ask us "how much" and stuff like that while we're at the bus stop in school uniform.
- The hassles are worse for the 7th formers because they're not in uniform.
- It's unsafe after school - after 5 pm, when you're doing extra-curricular activities at school.
- The end of the week is the worst.

- You wouldn't want to walk by yourself. After school that can be hard.
- We get asked to go into the shops. Men come out and stare at us. It's revolting.
- The condoms in the car park extend from the street into the school. We have heaps of problems with flashers and there have been rapes as well. The whole area is associated with sex.
- The shops have their blackboards with dollar signs on them. There's no restriction on what they write.
- They advertise 'school girl' things - yuck!
- How can you limit cigarette advertising and not limit sex advertising.
- The painting of the underwear on one was pathetic. It was a sop. It's ludicrous. It does nothing.

DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM AUCKLAND GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL, FREEMAN'S BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND NEWTON CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Summary of issues raised by consulted parties

- The schools, particularly Auckland Girls' Grammar, have a large catchment area for students and choice of school is not always an option for students and/or parents.
- The signs and the area have a generally negative impact on the schools. This is seen in terms of enrollments, the safety of students, health issues and the public's perception of the schools.
- The messages given by the signs are more important than the images themselves. These messages are negative towards and degrading of women and counter the positive messages given to students by the schools.
- Karangahape Road is changing to a more residential area.
- Traffic routes and access routes to the schools mean that the signs can not be avoided.
- The removal of the signs would be good for the schools and the community.
- Discreet advertising for adult shops and massage parlours is acceptable.
- Auckland Girls' Grammar has a long history of making complaints about the signs.

Notes taken during the meeting

- The Auckland Girls' Grammar School community draws on the whole central area. There are 76 contributing schools and 1,120 students. We have the largest catchment area in New Zealand. Any students coming from South Auckland have to walk up Karangahape Road to catch the Symonds Street bus.
- 60% - 70% of Auckland Girls' Grammar School students would catch the buses.
- Newton School roll draws on the local area. Our roll has doubled in three years.

- Freemans Bay roll draws on a wide area - partially because we have an immersion Maori unit in our school. Lots of parents who work in the area bring their children in by car.
- The students can't just decide to go elsewhere.
- All the Mt Albert schoolboys catch the bus on Karangahape Road.
- The impact of the signs on our school is that some parents don't send their daughters to Auckland Girls' Grammar School. The signs go against the school roll-wise. Parents make casual comments about the nature of Karangahape Road. These are always negative comments.
- Few students actually come to our school from Karangahape Road itself, but two or three times a year we walk as a school through the area. The kids are conscious of the 'sex area' of the road.
- Kids from our school meet their sisters at Auckland Girls' Grammar School. I have concern over their exposure to the signs. As a local school we support Auckland Girls' Grammar School's stand on the signs.
- We have worries about the development of Auckland generally - the casino, more sex shops, Fort Street. It's a concern when you consider Auckland's growing tourism - the Americas Cup, the Sydney Olympics. It's important to do something to stop the spread.
- The signs work against everything we [AGGS] do every day. They give an inappropriate message to the public.
- Both the nudity and the words are all degrading to women - sex for sale. The images are understood regardless of the age of the viewer.
- There's concern over the whip on the Kinks image - the negative messages given by the image.
- Even with the clothing on the Exclusive Shop sign the message is the same. The messages given are as serious as the images themselves. We have to protect students from the message that the images give, more than the images themselves. The message is harmful. Covering up the image doesn't stop it being provocative.
- The territory is marked as an area that women are for sale.
- The most alarming thing is the pictures of women naked and in degrading positions.
- You can't switch away from the signs like you can on television.
- You can avoid Fort Street. You can't avoid Karangahape Road.
- It would make a difference if the signs weren't on a main street.
- They're inappropriate on a public walkway.
- The lights mean that you can't avoid the signs being in your face. It's not just a foot traffic problem.
- The billboards do make a difference - they're put in your face - it's so offensive
- You cannot avoid the signs at the lights. The ones further down, you're moving when you pass them, but you still have to walk past them to catch the buses.
- We are sure that the removal of the signs would be of benefit to Karangahape Road. It would be beneficial to the safety of kids at schools. It would reduce the number of street workers.
- It would make a difference if the signs weren't there ... The shops would close ... maybe.
- I don't think taking the billboards down will change the nature of Karangahape Road, but it will remove the overt nature of it.
- There's been a restriction on some signs on the newer parlours. It makes the kids less aware of their activities.

- What would be acceptable with the signs is small signs with just the name of the establishment - subtle, eg. *Dawns*. Signs should have no naked or degraded images of women and no price listings.
- One boys' school put out a poster a while ago with photos of the girls at the bus stops. It read "K'Road Hookers. Phone Auckland Girls' Grammar School "
- We get street workers on the school grounds and outside the school gates as early as 7.30pm. This is while girls are still at school.
- There's been a tenfold increase in street workers in the last 5 years.
- It's the tourist stuff that's moved to Fort Street. What's stayed in Karangahape Road is the seedy stuff. You don't see many street workers in the Fort Street area. Most people in Karangahape Road at night are street workers.
- It's sad that we get so used to the problems of the area - condoms, signs, street workers.
- Last year, Harrah's Casino rented our school [AGGS] for staff training. After a woman was attacked and raped on the grounds, they installed powerful lights and a 24 hour guard. They said they were amazed at the after-dark use that the grounds get. We can't afford that sort of security, although we have tried to light some areas.
- The signs and the area they promote place the students more at risk than at other schools. There's the attraction of 'easy money' for the students. The condoms pose a health risk. [Referring to the number of discarded used condoms in the school grounds and upper carpark.]
- There is the issue of youth at risk in our schools. We've had students encouraged to enter the parlours. The Maori wardens and police broke up a party at a brothel after some of our students were invited to it. All the alcohol they could drink for \$5.00.
- Girls complain about flashers and being propositioned.
- Students who are late at school won't walk on Karangahape Road in groups of less than three. They won't wait alone outside the school gates. We supply taxi vouchers for students who are at school late.
- It's only safe for children because of their numbers or because their parents drop them off.
- Concern over the effect on Maori and Pacific Island students. It's hard to discuss issues on the signs/sex area with them as the subject is more taboo. We also have increasing numbers of Muslim students.
- The nature of the community and the street is changing. There are hotels like the Sheraton and \$350,000 apartments being developed. The shops are resisting change.
- There's a boom in young families in the Karangahape Road - inner city area. It brings a different slant on the area. People living here means increased residential properties.
- There are lots of old people and families with children in the council flats nearby.
- The first complaint about Karangahape Road was made in 1856 by Auckland Girls' Grammar School.
- We have complained to the council, police and the Advertising Standards Board. We have organised petitions.

DISCUSSION WITH THE YELLOW BUS COMPANY

Summary of issues raised by consulted party

- A large number of people travel on Yellow Bus Company buses through Karangahape Road.
- The bus company has only received one complaint about the Karangahape Road signs.
- After receiving complaints about the advertising of the film *The Colour of Night* on its buses, the company is trying to avoid controversial advertisements. The company has refused to advertise massage parlours on its buses.
- Advertising on the back of a bus is not able to be avoided by a driver of a car parked behind the bus. [A comparison was made to advertising opposite traffic lights.]

Notes taken during the meeting

- The buses going to Western Suburbs, Swanson, the City go through Karangahape Road. Of our fleet of 500 buses over 230 would go up and down Karangahape Road. Each of these would go past six times a day on average. Each bus holds approximately 50 people.
- Another bus company using Karangahape Road is the Whenuapai Bus Company.
- Karangahape Road is fine 'safety-wise' for our female drivers
- We could move the bus stops to make it safer for the school children. It would need consultation between the Auckland City Council, Auckland Regional Council and the bus company. It would be a good idea to re-designate the bus stop.
- Our company has had one complaint about the signs. A copy was faxed to your Office.
- No-one waiting at the bus-stops on Karangahape Road has complained to the company.
- Our own advertising on buses gets feedback from the public.
- The public made complaints about the advertising we used on the buses for the film *The Colour of Night*. We had dozens and dozens of complaints about that.
- Our bus company has been approached by some [massage] parlours to put advertising on the buses. We won't put their ads on the buses. We feel that would cause too much concern in the community. Also one third of our buses at peak time are carrying school children. We feel that especially makes that advertising inappropriate.
- We charge the most for advertising on the back of a bus because people behind the bus cannot get away from the advertisement.
- I would agree that that Kinks can't be avoided when you are stopped at the traffic lights. It's the same as on the back of a bus. You can't get away from it. When you're coming up Howe Street, they're very powerful because you have to look at them.
- The target audience of bus advertising depends on the siting of the advertisement on the bus. The rear ads have the most exposure and are the most expensive. This is because when a car is behind them the driver has to look at the advertisement. They can't look anywhere else.

DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KARANGAHAPE ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Summary of issues raised by consulted parties

- The Karangahape Road area is changing. It is becoming more residential, more affluent and is no longer the main 'red light' area of Auckland. All these factors make the signs increasingly inappropriate.
- People passing through Karangahape Road cannot avoid the signs.
- The signs and the people they attract can put people off visiting Karangahape Road which detrimentally affects other retail businesses.
- Customers of the sex shops are less likely to enter the shops when people can see them doing so. Less obvious signage might make customers more willing to be seen going into shops.
- The amount of signage above the shops is excessive. More subtle signage would be more acceptable.
- The messages of the signs still comes through even when the image is wearing clothes. These messages are negative towards women.
- Only a small percentage of the shops on the Karangahape Road are involved with the sex industry.
- Members of the retail association strongly support the removal of the signs.
- School girls are not safe in the area.
- The signs promote a link between sex and school girls.

Notes taken during the meeting

- The last two years there's been a social change in Karangahape Road. There is increased development and affluence in Karangahape Road - the shops are changing. The signs are increasingly becoming an issue - they are dragging Karangahape Road back. It will always be known as notorious K' Road while they're there.
- There are increasing numbers of families on Karangahape Road. People won't walk past the area the signs are in - that has a detrimental affect on other businesses.
- The stigmas associated with Karangahape Road - the sex workers, alcoholics, street kids - none of these are positive elements for Auckland.
- The video booth business used to be big, but it's now decreasing because there are more 'suits' in the area. Their main customers were street kids and alcoholics and they're not there as much now.
- There are hundreds of office workers in the area.
- The context of the neighborhood has changed. What was acceptable once is not acceptable now.
- Karangahape Road hasn't been the notorious red light district in Auckland for a long time.
- The most successful massage parlours are operating away from Karangahape Road.

- The more upmarket of the prostitutes are moving down to the casino area.
- Increased use of Karangahape Road has led to decreasing use of the sex shops. For example on Karangahape Road market days the sex shops have complained about their turnover being halved. People don't want to go into those shops with families and lots of people walking up and down the road.
- Increasing rents means that the shops may eventually go. Taking down the signs might speed that process.
- The signs are a problem because they're so visible.
- A lot of people pass through this neighbourhood and they don't have any options when faced with those signs.
- People have no choice with the signs. They can't not see them.
- It's not so much the industry - it's definitely the signs - the signs and what's on them is what I get complaints about.
- All four signs are offensive. The language and in particular the images are inappropriate.
- From a business point of view, there are few redeeming features of the sex shop signs.
- Other sex shops, eg Fort Street - are not seen as adding to the area. Why should the Karangahape Road shops be seen as any different?
- I don't want a compromise situation. The Kinks sign is no less injurious with clothing. It's the same as with the Vegas girl. The message is the same regardless of the clothes.
- There have been complaints to the police about the window displays [displays of crotchless lingerie was given as an example] and signs. About 12 times a year I get complaints - calls about the signs and window displays. Some of those are from Auckland Girls' Grammar School.
- The signs are artistically out of date, contextually out of date and increasingly offensive.
- They need to move into the 90's, away from the 60's stylized, tacky pictures.
- The Vegas Girl is particularly demeaning to women. Feedback about her from the public is negative. I don't think there's any excuse in the 90's for sleazy signs. They give negative messages to all groups of people. It's so demeaning - she's groveling - the worst picture of a woman - naked and grovelling on her hands and knees.
- Of all the signs, the Vegas Girl should go.
- I've been in Karangahape Road ten years and I've heard enough comments from people.
- I'm told it's offensive to women.
- The shop owners manipulate the publicity about the signs. They use it to raise their profile.
- I don't think it matters where the signs are - we don't need the signs.
- There's enough signage on the shops to say what they are without a lady above it. Is it necessary?
- I'm not in favour of the industry, but I accept it. The signage however is excessive.
- The sex shop owners seem to be pushing the limit to see who gets pulled up first.
- The promotion aspect is undesirable. They could do it more subtly.
- Two new shops have opened. Their visual appeal is subtle and inoffensive. We would like to see the four shops undergo a similar change.
- What we're dealing with now is the giving of respect. That message must be taken to the owners of the signs and they must take that on.
- Clientele might be more willing to enter the shops in public view if the signage were less obvious. Surely subtlety would be better for the clients. The clientele is somewhat

furtive. The majority don't particularly want to be identified. Removing the signage may mean the shops prosper.

- People don't want to enter those businesses when other people are watching.
- People go into those shops intentionally, not because they're just wandering past. You don't go in just because there is a sign saying "vibrators on special this week".
- Sex shops clients will always visit those shops regardless of where they are.
- Like attracts like. The more sex is promoted in the area the more it will attract those elements.
- The Karangahape Road Plaza management banned prostitutes from the Plaza and bars. That means they've been forced further down the road.
- We tried to get the shop owners to join the Association. One has joined very recently. We've been trying actively to get them on board.
- The owners of those businesses are by nature a furtive lot. One of the owners phoned the Association about two weeks ago when the issue arose, wanting to join.
- Seven shops out of the 300 on the road are sex shops. 90% of retail businesses on Karangahape Road are in the association. More than 90% of our members would be of the opinion that the signage should go. We recognise that the shops are businesses but they should tidy up their act.
- We conducted a survey asking retailers what they thought of the signs - they were quite insightful about the issues.
- Businesses often complain to the police of condoms in their car parks.
- The Karangahape Road Plaza has been unable to fill all its shops. The nature of the area is such that it does not encourage good tenants.
- The Karangahape Road Business Association have tried to light dark corners, for example car parks, with available funds.
- It's not safe to be alone at night.
- I have concern over the safety of the schoolgirls.
- I have concern over the linkage between schoolgirls and the sex industry. Clients are perceiving a link between schoolgirls and sex.
- There are regular problems with flashers in the area.
- The younger girls have had to come to terms with the area.
- There is a Prostitutes' Collective on the same block, so the social service is there for the working girls.

DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL

Summary of issues raised by consulted parties

- School girls should not be exposed to the signs.
- The images promoted negative message to the community.
- The possible character change to the street should the signs be removed was not as important as the removal of the demeaning effect of the signs.

- The Council had investigated legal options with regulating the signs. However it appeared little or no action had been taken. This had led to members of the public feeling frustrated with the Council's response.
- Any decision made on the signs will impact on all local bodies.
- The Council would welcome guidance on how to deal with the signs.

Notes taken during the meeting.

- I am both a parent and grandparent whose children and grandchildren have attended/attend Auckland Girls' Grammar School and a councillor whose constituents' children attend Auckland Girls' Grammar School. With Karangahape Road, girls travel through it because of the bus routes morning and night. I personally wouldn't want to expose my girls to it. The signs are not appropriate. My views are endorsed by people in my ward.
- If they were in a regulated area where they couldn't be seen by young ladies then it wouldn't be a problem.
- Auckland Girls' Grammar has a history of concern.
- Parents don't always have an option over which school to send their children to.
- We tried to get the Yellow Bus Company to send their buses along the road to the school so that the girls didn't have to walk along the road, but they didn't see the market value in the alternate route.
- The pictorial signs are the worst.
- The signs do harm the community. There's no doubt in my mind - rapes, relation of pornography to behaviour patterns.
- The signs and what they promote is a problem.
- It's both the effect and impact of the signs that's a problem. The signs can't be avoided.
- The signs aren't for the good of the community.
- People have become conditioned to what's on Karangahape Road .
- On a personal level, my family finds the signs objectionable. The kids and my wife object to us taking the Karangahape Road route when we're going through town. They complain when I drive that way. I personally feel the signs aren't necessary.
- As a councillor, the majority of the population don't want the signs.
- Karangahape Road has been a source of complaint over many years.
- The complaints focus on the fact that the signs are degrading to women and offensive to children.
- They're the "most frightful visual pollution".
- I personally find them deeply offensive.
- Possibly the Vegas Girl could be described as an icon but I don't see the character of the street as a major issue. The demeaning effect is more important.
- It may change Karangahape Road if the signs go, but that's what people want.
- Nothing was done by the Council about the 1,700 signature petition presented to them in 1993. People are feeling frustrated.
- The petition was dropped by the council. I can see we will have to resurrect it. I don't know what the answer is, but I'd support any action.
- The vast majority of the council's opinion, if not the unanimous opinion, would be in favour of tightening up.

- The law needs to be changed. There are helmets for cycling to protect the outside of the head but they can't protect what goes into the mind. The size of the signs is severely regulated by building bylaws, but there's no control over what goes on them. It's a hypocrisy in law.
- There's a sense of helplessness in the public - these things happen and there's nothing we can do.
- There was action over the "no ifs no butts" sign. Someone took the law into their own hands.
- From an enforcement point of view - I'd welcome any guidance.
- It's a lot of kerfuffle for four signs.
- We have tried to strengthen the bylaws on the signs. We got advice from Simpson Grierson on strengthening the bylaws so that we were in a better position to enforce them. Our legal advice was that we could not put our own interpretation on what was objectionable. There is debate on how to interpret the bylaws.
- The bylaw on signs has been used - it was used once on a sign containing 'foul language'. It was also used on a breach of the allowed size for signs by the Exclusive Shop.
- Any decision will have far reaching ramifications for councils round the country. Hopefully that will take some of the confusion away.
- We can't outlaw the businesses. If they're entitled to run the business then they should be able to advertise - it's the level of advertising that's the issue.
- They are legitimate businesses. But any legitimate business has restrictions on its advertising. For example alcohol.
- There's a need for all business in Auckland to be involved in the 'safer city concept'.
- I didn't see a problem with the establishment of those places ['sex' businesses in Fort Street] but they have caused problems for local businesses. For example they need to escort clients to their cars if they visit after ordinary hours and there have been problems during the day time as well.
- Fort Street is becoming a safety issue. It is an area that will be subject to redevelopment.
- The red light area now includes Symonds Street as well.
- If we put pressure on the sex industry in one area, they move to another.
- The Auckland sex shops are moving into the suburbs, so more and more the Councils need guidelines to control signage and posters.
- Karangahape Road is zoned inner city residential area and this can cause difficulties with accepted usage for the zone. Karangahape Road is increasingly residential in its usage.
- Time will change Karangahape Road back into a residential area with supermarkets etc. There will be another evolution in the area making it uneconomic for the sex businesses to stay.
- Aucklanders know where to go [for the 'services' available on Karangahape Road]. Strangers need just ask the nearest taxi driver or policeman.

Further enquiries to be made: Nil

Invitations to make written submissions: No

Written submissions received from: Not Applicable

Assistance completed:

Date: 23 August 1996

Signed:

OFLC Ref:9600071